



UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
United States Patent and Trademark Office
Address: COMMISSIONER FOR PATENTS
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1450
www.uspto.gov

APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/699,807	11/03/2003	Timothy K. Ford	56216-701USPT	4436
24238 7590 12/01/2008 LOCKE LORD BISSELL & LIDDELL LLP ATTN: IP DOCKETING 600 TRAVIS STREET SUITE 3400 HOUSTON, TX 77002-3095				
EXAMINER				
VIG, NARESH				
ART UNIT		PAPER NUMBER		
3629				
MAIL DATE		DELIVERY MODE		
12/01/2008		PAPER		

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

10/699,807

Applicant(s)

FORD ET AL.

Examiner

NARESH VIG

Art Unit

3629

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --
Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 1 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 03 November 2003.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☐ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-91 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☒ Claim(s) 1-91 are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☐ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/CDC)
- Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____

- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application
- 6) ☐ Other: _____

DETAILED ACTION

Election/Restrictions

Restriction to one of the following inventions is required under 35 U.S.C. 121:

- I. Claims 1 – 80 and 88, drawn to system and method for managing real estate transaction by entering into a multiple listing service (MLS) information relating to a property involved, monitoring the progress of said real estate transaction; managing the post-closing activities related to said real estate transaction; information to a participant of said transaction can be delivered electronically; participant is notified when a transaction documents are modified; progress of real estate transactions are tracked, monitored and logged and participant is granted access to a transaction activity log, classified in class 705, subclass 1.
- II. Claims 81 – 82, drawn to system and method for managing real estate transaction by entering into a multiple listing service (MLS) information relating to a property involved, monitoring the progress of said real estate transaction; managing the post-closing activities related to said real estate transaction; information to a participant of said transaction can be delivered electronically; participant is notified when a transaction documents are modified; progress of real estate transactions are tracked, monitored and logged and participant is granted access to a transaction activity log, classified in class 705, subclass 1.

- III. Claims 83 – 87, drawn to method for managing real estate transaction management wherein real estate agents have access to information relating to properties for sale within a defined geographic area; providing access to said MLS over a network; providing parties that provide services related to the purchase or sale of real estate with access to said MLS; and when one of said properties within said real estate multiple listing system is under contract, providing a checklist of tasks that need to be completed by each of the parties involved in the transaction in order to complete the sale of said property; allowing buyers and sellers to select services from parties engaged in providing services, classified in class 705, subclass 1.
- IV. Claims 89 – 91, drawn to a method for integrating MLS with real estate transaction management service; allowing real estate service providers to pay a fee to advertise and participate in said real estate transaction management service; thereby gaining exposure to the participants in said real estate multiple listing service; providing a portion of said fee to the operator of said MLS, classified in class 705, subclass 14.

The inventions are distinct, each from the other because of the following reasons:

Inventions I – IV are related as subcombinations disclosed as usable together in a single combination. The subcombinations are distinct if they do not overlap in scope and are not obvious variants, and if it is shown that at least one subcombination is separately usable. In the instant case

subcombination I has separate utility such as, monitoring the progress of said real estate transaction; managing the post-closing activities related to said real estate transaction; participant is notified when a transaction documents are modified; progress of real estate transactions are tracked, monitored and logged and participant is granted access to a transaction activity log;

subcombination II has separate utility such as method for managing real estate transaction by listing seller's property in MLS (MLS like MRIS in DC Metropolitan area has seller's properties entered by a real estate agent, whereas, MLS like Realtor.org retrieves the information from other local MLS' like MRIS); allowing at least one service provider to have access to the network used by the method to provide services related to said real estate transaction to said seller and said buyer.

subcombination III has separate utility such as method for managing real estate by providing a checklist of tasks that need to be completed by each of the parties

involved in the transaction in order to complete the sale of said property; allowing buyers and sellers to select services from parties engaged in providing services.

subcombination IV has separate utility such as a method for integrating MLS with real estate transaction management service; allowing service providers to pay a fee to advertise and participate in said real estate transaction management service; providing a portion of said fee to the operator of said MLS.

Restriction for examination purposes as indicated is proper because all these inventions listed in this action are independent or distinct for the reasons given above and there would be a serious search and examination burden if restriction were not required because one or more of the following reasons apply:

- (a) the inventions have acquired a separate status in the art in view of their different classification;
- (b) the inventions have acquired a separate status in the art due to their recognized divergent subject matter;
- (c) the inventions require a different field of search (for example, searching different classes/subclasses or electronic resources, or employing different search queries);
- (d) the prior art applicable to one invention would not likely be applicable to another invention;

(e) the inventions are likely to raise different non-prior art issues under 35 U.S.C. 101 and/or 35 U.S.C. 112, first paragraph.

Applicant is advised that the reply to this requirement to be complete must include (i) an election of a invention to be examined even though the requirement may be traversed (37 CFR 1.143) and (ii) identification of the claims encompassing the elected invention.

The election of an invention may be made with or without traverse. To reserve a right to petition, the election must be made with traverse. If the reply does not distinctly and specifically point out supposed errors in the restriction requirement, the election shall be treated as an election without traverse. Traversal must be presented at the time of election in order to be considered timely. Failure to timely traverse the requirement will result in the loss of right to petition under 37 CFR 1.144. If claims are added after the election, applicant must indicate which of these claims are readable on the elected invention.

If claims are added after the election, applicant must indicate which of these claims are readable upon the elected invention.

Should applicant traverse on the ground that the inventions are not patentably distinct, applicant should submit evidence or identify such evidence now of record showing the inventions to be obvious variants or clearly admit on the record that this is the case. In either instance, if the examiner finds one of the inventions unpatentable over the prior art, the evidence or admission may be used in a rejection under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) of the other invention.

A telephone interview was not conducted due to complexity of the restriction requirement and since the examiner knows from past experience that an election will not be made by telephone. (see MPEP 812.01).

Applicant is reminded that upon the cancellation of claims to a non-elected invention, the inventorship must be amended in compliance with 37 CFR 1.48(b) if one or more of the currently named inventors is no longer an inventor of at least one claim remaining in the application. Any amendment of inventorship must be accompanied by a request under 37 CFR 1.48(b) and by the fee required under 37 CFR 1.17(i).

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to NARESH VIG whose telephone number is (571)272-6810. The examiner can normally be reached on Mon-Thu 7:00 - 5:30.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, John Weiss can be reached on (571) 272-6812. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

November 22, 2008

/Naresh Vig/
Primary Examiner, Art Unit 3629